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Linking Security and Development in China-Central Asia Relations: Regional Interdependence and SDG Advancement

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the security parameters of the China-Central Asia partnership and their role in strengthening regional as well as trans-regional collaboration toward achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By using the lens of Complex Interdependence Theory, the study conceptualizes security as interlocked with institutional, economic, infrastructural and developmental processes rather than as a domain solely confined to military relationships. A qualitative research approach is used to examine Beijing's security engagement with the Central Asian republics through multiple channels of communication or interaction including border security, counterterrorism, energy security, infrastructure protection and regional security-based cooperation that enable conditions for stability, development and connectivity, thereby sustaining SDG-related outcomes. China's development-oriented security approach integrates development and security by viewing political stability, economic growth and regional cooperation as equally reinforcing elements of a broader security strategy. The study mainly argues that security cooperation between China and Central Asian republics goes beyond traditional threat management by connecting security with development and regional interdependence and establishing potential pathways across the region for advancing sustainable development.

Keywords: Central Asia, Regional Interdependence, Development and Security, China, UN SDGs.

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Evolution of the Security-development Relationship

Overtime, the conceptions of security and development have advanced. Traditionally, security was essentially related to the protection of state from external military aggressions by trusting its own strategic arrangements and capabilities, as states behave according to the principle of self-help in this anarchic international order where security is the highest end (Waltz, 1979). However, in 1970s, the concept of security was turned away or changed from the militarized perspective to a program for sustainable development that are directed to get rid of things like disease, poverty, unemployment and hunger. McNamara argues that in contemporary era security means development, it is not solely dependent on military capabilities, though it may involve it; nor it is exclusively embedded in military force or traditional military endeavors, though it may comprehend or encompass it; rather development and security are reciprocally reinforcing, in the absence of development enduring security cannot be achieved because security is intrinsically connected to development (McNamara, 1968). So, any state that struggles to achieve only military security while facing rapid population growth, severe food shortage, low production and per capita income, limited technological advancement and a persistent unemployment issue ultimately possesses an illusion of security (Okolie, 2022). To support this claim, Okolie cite Nwolise, 1985, who cautioned that a country may possess best or highly trained forces, strong security institutions, efficient police and active secret service agents, yet be the most insecure one in the world, if it faces problem and issues like poor governance, hunger, unemployment, social alienation and even act of terrorism (Okolie, 2022).

In the post-cold war era emerging threats or challenges such as natural disasters, disease, poverty, terrorism, acute unemployment and others significantly altered the way security was conceptualize leading towards a more human-centric perceptive of security. This modern perspective or human-centric dimension of security emphasis on enhancing the living standers of citizens by mitigating the threats that endangers their survival and safety while simultaneously ensuring the security and stability

of the state. Hence, the report of 1994 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reconceptualize security as freedom from want and fear by an individual, which takes note of broader view of security encompassing health, food, environment, economic, personal, political and community security (Shiga, 2024). Anderson argues that the new paradigm of security studies considers these threats as security concerns not only for the state itself but to human and broader international community (Anderson, 2012). Growing prominence or acceptance of this concept of human security is contributory to the impetus behind this agenda.

Similarly, the meaning of development has changed overtime fundamentally being linked with economic growth and industrialization in the 1940s to broader concerns and modernization to include structural adjustment, good governance and welfare (Uddin & Ashrafun, 2007). These manifestation of development were further augmented in 1970s by extensive consideration of poverty, basic necessities and fair income distribution (Ingham, 1993). Drawing on Pietersee's perspective, Osei-Hwedie and Kurantin argues that development requires societal transformation, advancement of democracy and good governance as the essential means for poverty reduction as underscored in the MDGs and SDGs (Osei-Hwedie & Kurantin, 2020). Hence, the growing emphasis on human development significantly marked a shift from purely state-centric approach of development.

The mutual reinforcement of security-development has become a dominant feature of national and global policy framework, employed by especially donor institutions and analytical think tanks to address the problems and challenges of the twenty-first century (Stern & Öjendal, 2010). The linkage between development and security originated after the end of second world war, as a part of western development assistance strategy to developing countries (Barrett, 2018). This approach largely shaped by the perception that poverty in developing states is posing threats to western security interests and could potentially drive alignment with communist bloc in Eastern Europe or China (Osei-Hwedie & Kurantin, 2020).

In recent decade the relationship between security

and development has emerged as a prominent or fashionable way for understanding the relationship between security and development concerns. Chandler further argues that prior to the end of cold war security and development were not entirely separate policy areas, their linkage or association was much more mediated or shaped by the geo-political dynamics of that time (Chandler, 2007). According to Kofi Annan, development and security are inseparably linked as he argues that a secure and stable world can only be achieved when poor or developing states are provided genuine opportunities to grow. Even people in developed countries will be more secure if their authorities help or assist poor states to enhance their living standards (Barrett, 2018). The reciprocal relationship between security and development can be identify through the final outcome of the world summit held in 2005 at the UN that declare boldly “Without security there is no development, and without development there is no security” (Tschirgi, Lund, & Mancini, 2010).

Research Methodology

The principal objective of this research is to examine what are the security parameters of partnership between China and Central Asia to nourish the regional as well as trans-regional collaboration for achieving UN SDGs. This study employs a qualitative research methodology based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include white papers, policy documents, official statements and institutional records, while secondary sources comprise academic literature; books, articles and research reports. The collected material is thematically analyzed to observe the linkage between development, security, regional interdependence and SDG advancement.

Theoretical Framework

The relevance of Keohane and Nye’s Complex Interdependence to this research work lies in its three core assumptions such as multiple channels of interaction, the absence of a clear or consistent hierarchy among issues, and no use of military force in shaping international relations (Nye & Keohane, 2004). These core assumptions meticulously correspond to the China’s engagement in Central Asia through its grand BRI. Accordingly, security cooperation can facilitate connectivity and stability, while economic and infrastructural interdependence can

instantaneously strengthen incentives for enduring security cooperation. The theory enables the study to examine how collaboration in one domain can create cooperation and dependencies in other domains.

Dimensions of Security Engagement between China and Central Asia

For the advancement of Central Asian security personnel, a variety of in-China training programs were offered by the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), many of them are aimed to share knowledge or experience in anti-terrorism, crowd control, techniques of investigation, cyber and pipeline security, counter-drug trafficking etc (Yamaguchi, 2026). In recent years, extensive bilateral training or exercises has become regular between China and Central Asian states especially its neighbors Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan as they decided to conduct jointly once a year or every two years. Although China’s regional security engagement emerged from the concerns over border insecurity, regional instability, transnational extremism and the potential spillover of non-traditional security, China subsequently deepened its influence through formalizing security partnership or cooperation with Central Asian leadership. All the regional states have been engaged by China in security dialogue, and security cooperation has increased through multilateral means such as SCO and more importantly bilaterally. Combating or fighting against extremism and terrorism, a short-term goal in its immediate area is more tangible but likely to be more challenging to accomplish, than the broader long-term objective of regional influence.

Counterterrorism and Regional Stability

Stability in Central Asia is considered a strategic imperative for China’s regional security calculation as China intends to position the region as an integral part of its broader security architecture. Accordingly, Cavus argues that China has intensified cooperation with the Central Asina nations to promote peace in the border region, strengthen security cooperation, enhanced military ties (Cavus, 2025). Simultaneously, its efforts to combat three evils are aimed to preserve the region as stable, non-nuclear and drug-free zone. Beijing’s strategy gives precedence to the development of strong bilateral relations that can

later facilitate or enable effective multilateral cooperation. Through continuous or sustained bilateral and multilateral engagement, China and the Central Asian states have enhanced mutual trust and coordinated responses to shared security questions. All efforts to deal with transnational crimes and to eliminate extremist threats lay the foundational security or favorable environment required to attain the UN SDGs across the region.

Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure under the SCO, promote cooperation among member states for regional stability and to combat extremism, terrorism and separatism. To enhance organization's interoperation capabilities military officials of the participant states, work together, such engagement with the troops of China and Russia offers valuable opportunities for training to the Central Asian national armies (Oğuz & Karabulut, 2022). For promising international military operations, structural basis under RATS has further established by the member states, as they hold these exercises for peace-building efforts. Furthermore, the formation of additional platforms such as China-Central Asia Foreign Ministers Mechanism (C+C5) and Lianyungang Forum makes evident Beijing's efforts to expand or strengthen institutionalized regional engagement. These mechanisms not only enhanced security coordination but also reinforces the patterns of regional interdependence (Yau, 2022). From the perspective of Complex Interdependence, enhanced security cooperation creates conditions for sustained interaction among China and the Central Asian republics, thereby supporting the institutional and developmental objectives associated particularly with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Border and Transit Security

As a part of confidence-building efforts and border stability, China assured not to use nuclear weapons against Kazakhstan. This commitment was reinforced by signing the confidence-building pact on April 26, 1996, by the leaders of Russia, China and its three Central Asian neighbors Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (United Nations Peacemaker, 1996). Border security consistently occupies fundamental place in China's growing presence or interests in Central Asia and expanding its presence. Koncak and

Almazbekov argues that a new Chinese-funded military base will be built near the Afghan border in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast which is a key way station for BRI (Koncak & Almazbekov, 2022).

China already runs a military base in Tajikistan's Murghab region, a remote area close to the Wakhan Corridor and the Afghan border (Koncak & Almazbekov, 2022). As per the approval of Tajikistan's lawmaking body in March 2026, China is set to finance the construction of new nine border facilities in the frontier regions of Tajikistan with Afghanistan (Jalolova, 2026). She further argues that these new facilities follow previous cooperation between the two states where 12 Chinese-supported border installations were reportedly constructed in 2017-2018 as per the Tajik security officials.

Importance of border and transit security elevated significantly after the unveiling of the BRI as the region become a major transit corridor connecting China with Europe, South Asia and Middle East through integrated transport and extensive railways networks, logistics system, pipelines and highways. Consequently, securing these transport routes, customs infrastructure and border chokepoints became critical for sustaining continuous flows of trade and connectivity. In this regard, Beijing has expanded or strengthen cooperation with Central Asian republics through customs coordination, intelligence sharing, improved or modernized infrastructure and joint border perambulation mechanism. These developments demonstrate that border and transportation security are closely linked not only military concerns but also intertwined with enhanced economy, regional integration or connectivity under the BRI. So, the expansion of BRI trade corridors boosted the strategic significance of border and transit security, urging greater cooperation to maintain or protect economic connectivity.

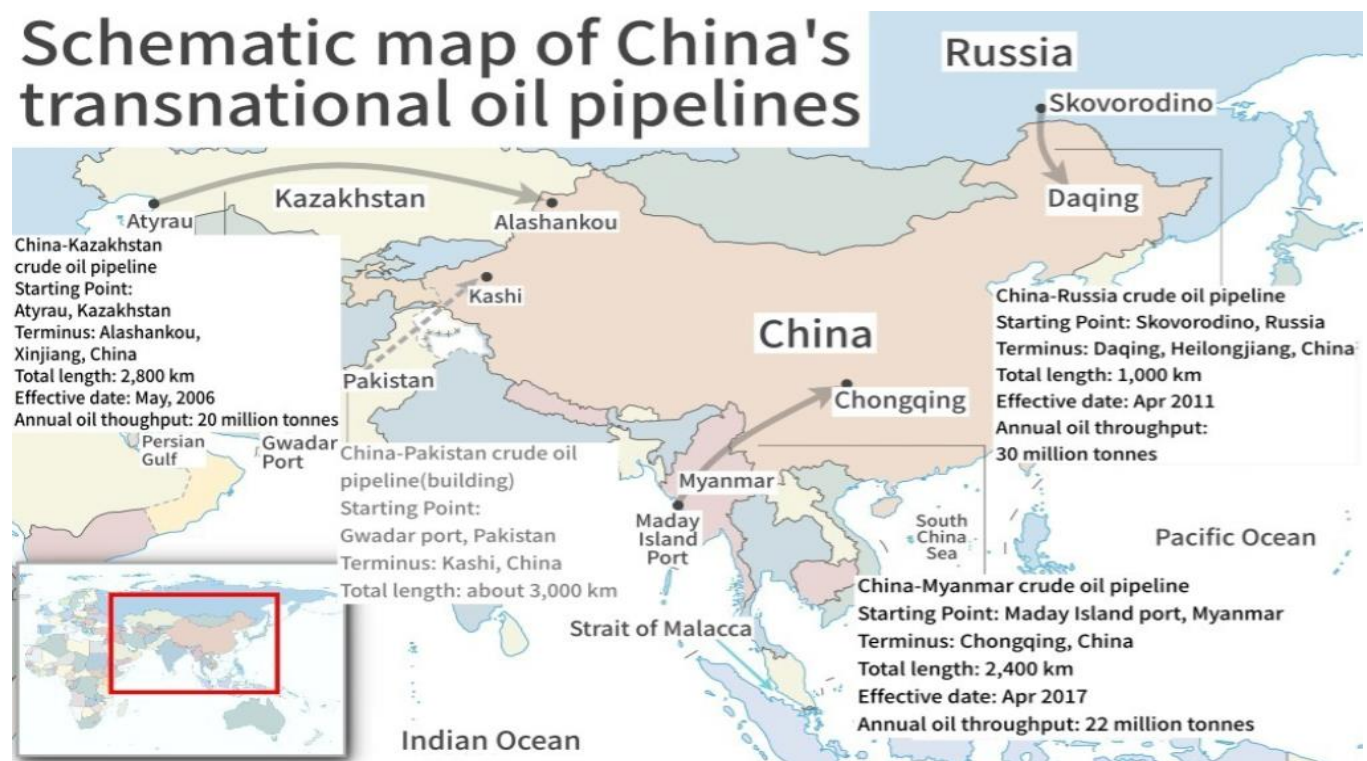
Energy Cooperation and Security

The dimension of energy security encompasses the reliable availability, accessibility and continuous flow of energy resources that are crucial for the economic growth and regional stability. Central Asian energy security has appeared as a significant element of Chinese regional engagement due to its substantial

hydrocarbons and hydropower resources. China's rising energy consumption coupled with its strategy or pursuit of diversified energy supply routes are the significant aspects for deeper and strengthen cooperation with the Central Asian republics. In this 21st century the strategic importance of energy security has prompted world powers to secure the reliable energy supply routes from serious geopolitical uncertainties and supply disruptions. So, in this context reducing its potential dependence on any specific energy corridor or supply route has become crucial for China's long-standing energy strategy, as the abundant natural resources enhanced the region's strategic relevance not only for China but also for other major global or regional powers (Supyaldiyarov & Aliyeva, 2024). China not only sought to satisfy its growing energy demands but also contribute to the broader aim of establishing resilient, sustainable and diversified energy security framework.

China's Transnational Oil Pipelines

Schematic map of China's transnational oil pipelines



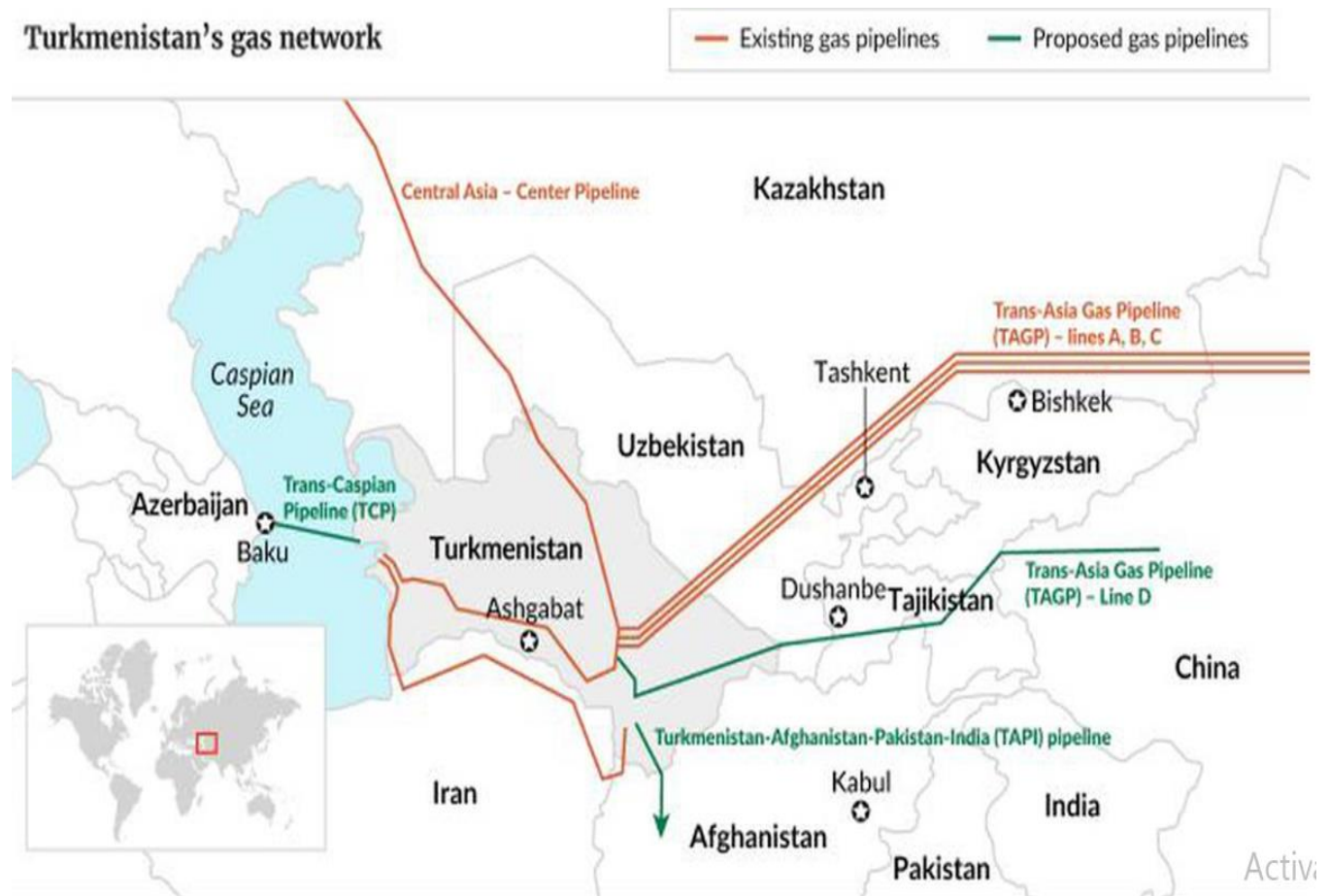
Source: (Nuo, 2026).

The second one is Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline, with the completion of line C the total annual capacity or volume of the three parallel lines of the pipeline was reached to 55 billion cubic meters of gas by 2014, as it runs from Turkmenistan through Uzbekistan and

Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline and the Kazakhstan-China Oil Pipeline are the two major milestone of China's energy infrastructure advancement (Xie, 2021). China's enterprises get access to the region's natural energy resources through its connectivity-oriented engagement as its energy security depends on building stable access routes to energy hubs that insulate its economy to some extent from West Asian volatility. China's crude oil imports remain largely dependent on maritime transportation, however, to completely evade the so-called Malacca Dilemma by sea routes is challenging. So, in order to broaden the risk horizons and stable energy supply China has built transnational land pipelines to import oil through neighboring states, one of these three oil pipeline is Kazakhstan-China oil Pipeline as illustrated in the diagram below (Nuo, 2026).

Kazakhstan to reach China. In Central Asia, with total length of 5,511 kilometers for the three core lines (below figure) this pipeline network is not only the lengthiest one but also the most expensive project implemented by China in the region (Aminjonov & Dovgalyuk, 2023).

Gas Networks in Turkmenistan



Source: (Aminjonov & Dovgalyuk, 2023)

China has become a most important destination for the Central Asian energy exports while Turkmenistan has emerged as biggest natural gas supplier. According to the Reddy, to enhance Beijing's energy security, Line D is proposed under the China-Central Asia Gas Pipeline which is expected to carry round about 85 billion cubic meters of natural gas (Reddy, 2025). By the officials of China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Pipeline is a symbolic representation of solidarity and mutually promising cooperation. Chinese reliance on Central Asian gas enhances its energy security, whereas revenues from trading resources are projected to boost or enhance the socioeconomic growth in the region (Aminjonov & Dovgalyuk, 2023). The construction of such oil and gas infrastructure projects has significantly increased the energy trade between China and Central Asian states. Furthermore, these infrastructure developments are directly contributory towards the realization of UN SDGs by encouraging industrial development, energy accessibility, economic integration and cross-

border partnership. The complexive patterns of communication between nations includes energy, environmental and economic ties that are challenging to the traditional realist thoughts (Mat & Khalid, 2024). The significant outcome of interdependence is political stability, as these reciprocal dependencies raised by the BRI lessen the prospect of conflict and advance the regional stability.

Digital and Cyber Security

In recent decades, government have been increasingly compelled or encouraged to adopt new standards are practices due to the global development initiatives led by emerging powers and international organizations (IOs). Effective implementation of UN SDGs in all countries demands not only robust coordination among the governmental policies across all administrative level but also vigorous global partnership that will be facilitating sharing of knowledge, technology and expertise (Tanaka, 2026). Chinese engagement in Central Asia also encompasses the realm of digital governance and Cybersecurity

which have become increasingly an important dimension of security under the frameworks of the SCO and the digital component of BRI, the Digital Silk Road. Although its initial engagement was primarily focused on security concerns that were associated to separatism, terrorism and extremism, but they have gradually been expanded due to the growing strategic importance of digital infrastructure, satellite networks and cross-border data flow as they broaden the scope of coordination to rope in information and cyber security. These growing digital links or relationships are illustrating the notion of Complex Interdependence, in which information and technological networks are generating new channels to interact and shared dependence that extend or goes beyond traditional nature of political and military relations.

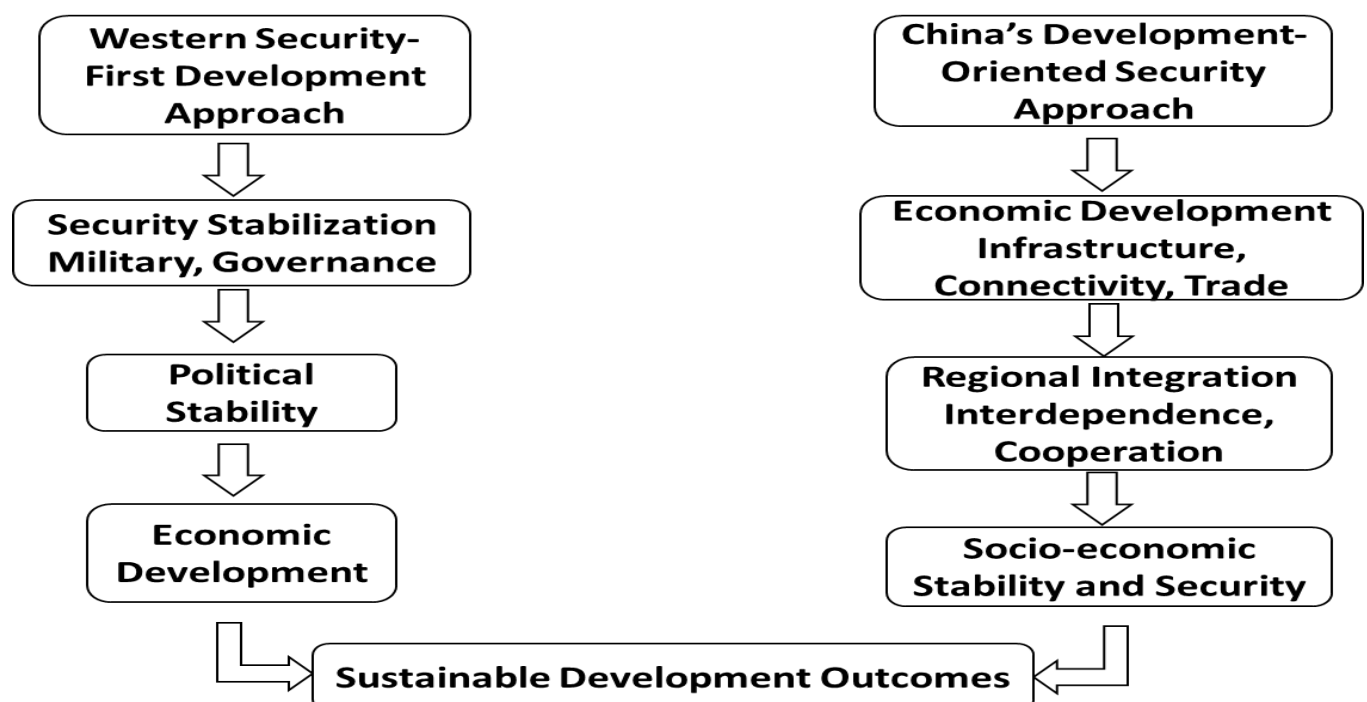
Beijing is promoting transnational infrastructure networks through its digital silk road which aims to increase information connectivity among or beyond BRI nations, and Central Asia occupies a strategically core position within this project (Motkin, 2026). Chinese technologies are creating new patterns or layers of dependencies and connectivity as they progressively facilitate economic, social and political interactions in the region which is directly contributory to the realization of SDG 17 through greater global partnerships and sharing of knowledge, where

Motkin, shows his concerns that it is difficult to unwind if they established (dependencies). Unlike the prevailing model of west which is multi-stakeholder and rooted in private sector. Professor Tanaka argues, that in sovereignty-based model all states will be equally participating in cyberspace governance through global governance mechanisms, while non-state actors or private sector companies will operate under the inclusive UN-centered governance structure (Tanaka, 2026). This signifying how development generates new shapes of security cooperation.

China's Development-Oriented Security Approach

security-development connection was not exclusively employed by the West as the basis of shaping its foreign policy towards developing countries. Emerging powers, primarily China has employed its own version of this interconnection towards its external engagement as an alternate to western liberal peace model which often emphasizes intervention and democratic governance reforms in developing states. Whereas China advances economic peace model centered on political stability, state sovereignty and infrastructure-driven economic development (Hameiri, Jonesb, & Zou, 2019). Thus, its mutual reinforcement presents alternative and relatively new model to that of the West, as reflected in diagram below.

Chinese Model for Development-Oriented Security



(Compiled by the Author)

The given diagram demonstrates the contrasting approaches toward the linkage between security and development. While western model generally gives precedence to military and political stabilization as a precondition for development, China put emphasis to economic cooperation, regional integration and connectivity through infrastructure as paths for long-term stability and security. In the context of Central Asia, China's development-oriented approach is signified or reflected through the BRI, which seeks to enhance or strengthen regional interdependence and give rise to promising environment for sustainable development.

Professor Gong argues that under the President Xi Jinping, China progressively sought to modernize the international security governance structure, inspiring the US-led security architecture by endorsing an alternative idea or vision for global stability (Gong, 2026). Wang Yi lay emphasis on that China will always be part of the big family of developing states as it is an ex-officio member of the Global South. He further says that China is willing to work with them and the emerging market countries to advance the implementation of the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI), the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), and Global Governance Initiative (GGI) and together build a community with a shared future for humankind (MOFA, PRC, 2023).

Strategic and Normative Framework

China presented an organized global governance frameworks, including Global Development Initiative (GDI) Global Security Initiative (GSI), Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) and Global Governance Initiative (GGI) (MOFA, PRC, 2025). The prime focus of GDI is to promote global cooperation on development, the GSI is designed to encouraging dialogue over international disputes and to safeguard stability, the GCI aims to promote mutual understanding among civilizations, and the GGI proposes to provide guidance and directions for restructuring the global governance institutions (MOFA, PRC, 2025). Having their respective priorities these initiatives can be pursued in concert, as collectively they create a holistic framework for advancing the vision of a community with a

shared destiny for humankind.

Global Development Initiative (GDI)

In face of severe global disruptions by COVID-19, GDI was proposed by the President Xi Jinping in 2021 at the UN, steering global development to a new phase of coordinated, balanced and inclusive trajectory (China Insight , 2022). Needed to foster all-encompassing development-based collaboration that forge greater synergy among multilateral cooperation platforms and accelerate the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda. In recent years, sustainable development has challenged by multiple factors such as, the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical skirmishes and the evolving international landscape. Xiaoqiang argues that, development which is unequal and unsatisfactory among states has become increasingly evident, promoting grave concerns for the global community such as development differences and growing inequality (Xiaoqiang, 2025). So, GDI adheres to some core principles, specifically development as a main concern, a people-centered approach, innovation driven change, inclusiveness and profit for all, nature connectedness or sustainability and impact-driven actions (CIKD, 2025).

Xi Jinping emphasis that every state has an inherent right to development, and the people across the nation should enjoy the freedom to pursue a happy and prosperous life. In this context he proposed the GDI, aimed at encouraging the international community to promote inclusive global development and to advance the UN 2030 Agenda (Jinping, 2025). Highlighting its persuasive convergence with the 2030 agenda, UN Resident Coordinator in China, Siddharth Chatterjee, stated that GDI's Concept Paper reflects eight SDG priority areas including poverty eradication, good health, food security, industrialization, climate action, planet, innovation and means of implementation (Chatterjee, 2021). According to Chaudry, this initiative is kind of rebranding of BRI as it directly tackles criticisms regarding lack of transparency and debt sustainability that BRI faces (Chaudhry, 2025). So, it seeks to present Chinese economic engagement as a more selfless and holistic contribution to global governance.

Global Security Initiative (GSI)

In 2022, President Xi Jinping unveil GSI during

his speech at the Boao Forum, proposing a shared, effective and sustainable structural design of global security (Haque, 2026). As the need for shared, cooperative, inclusive and sustainable security that advocates the notion of indivisible security, has emerged as a cornerstone of Chinese approach to reshape global security governance (Mehta & Chadha, 2022). In 2023, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a GSI Concept Paper highlighting its aim to address the structural causes of international conflicts, strengthening global security mechanism, fostering joint efforts for more stable environment conducive to durable peace and development (MOFA, PRC, 2023). Furthermore, the Concept Paper explains the intertwined nature of traditional and nontraditional security concerns and adopts a comprehensive security approach encompassing UN peacebuilding, counterterrorism, peacekeeping, arms control, major-power coordination, climate change and resolving regional hotspot issues (Freeman, Gill, & McFarland, 2024). GSI is not an institution nor taken an institutional form yet, it represents China's normative effort to neutralize US domination in security affairs by promoting an alternative security norms or models.

China's security coordination or cooperation with all five regional republics under the GSI unequivocally deal with the prevention of violence, which supports or may contribute to SDG-16. By strengthening efforts against transnational crimes and extremist groups or their networks, these initiatives are promoting peaceful and inclusive societies projected or envisioned under SDG-16. GSI advances a framework of security which is based on the principles of sovereignty, noninterference and collaboration for counterterrorism closely align with the domestic security concerns of Central Asian states. Schuman et. al argues, that GSI have been propagating with greater urgency by Chinese officials or representatives, for example, the 12-point Peace plan or Position paper released by China in 2023 on resolving the Ukraine crisis, deeply relied on the above-mentioned ideas found under GSI (Schuman, Fulton, & Gering, 2023).

Beyond military interaction China has increased law enforcement cooperation with these states, where to combat terrorism and organized crimes it has established cybersecurity initiatives,

agreements on intelligence sharing and police training programs (Meena, 2025). Initiatives like BRI, C+C5 mechanism and GSI reflects broader Chinese approach of linking development and security to achieve regional peace and stability, which are well-received by the Central Asian authorities. This pattern of engagement demonstrates a growing convergence between regional security cooperation and the implementation of the UN SDGs, particularly SDG-16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG-17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Measures aimed at countering terrorism, military training, cybersecurity collaboration, border management and transit security initiatives foster not only peaceful and stable regional environment but also serves as a prerequisite for sustainable development and regional partnership. Chinese investment-based energy pipelines, digital infrastructure, transport corridor and connectivity projects support broader development goals promoting energy accessibility, technological innovation or modernization, trade facilitation and regional integration across the region. So, in this regard Beijing's engagement in the region manifests development-oriented security approach in which it employs development as an instrument of security where economic integration, connectivity and institutional cooperation are regarded as mutually reinforcing foundations for long-standing regional peace, stability and sustainable development.

Global Civilization Initiative (GCI)

Together with the GDI and GSI, GCI seeks to reinforce broader Chinese vision of global governance by promoting global consensus and shared understanding to address interconnected and emerging challenges related to security, peace, development and harmonious coexistence (Desheng, 2023). Hierarchical observation of civilization and supporting civilizational antagonism caused fragmentation within the international community. These dynamics or practices not only eroded the efficacy of multilateral cooperation but also slowed down the advancement of human society. By putting civilization at the centre of global governance, GCI stresses that to foster international cooperation respect for civilizational diversity is indispensable, where coexistence, mutual learning and cultural exchange are crucial drivers for

human progress, global peace, and sustainable development (Xiaoqiang, 2025).

Global Governance Initiative (GGI)

The white paper outlines a Chinese vision of global governance system, which is grounded in joint contribution for common future and extensive consultation, where President Xi Jinping advocates a true multilateralism to promote equitable multipolar world and an inclusive model of economic globalization which is beneficial for all states (Xinhua, 2026). In 2025, GGI was introduced at the summit of SCO in Tianjin, a call for restructuring global governance, promoting greater representation for developing states, reinforcing multilateralism and fostering a more just, inclusive global governance order (Haque, 2026). The initiative gained positive responses from notable international leaders, as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Russian President Vladimir Putin commend its commitment to constructive and multilateral global governance structure (Pinkstone, 2025).

The Concept paper on the GGI is guided by five core principles such as; staying committed to sovereign equality, international rule of law, practicing multilateralism, people-centered approach and real and sustainable results (MOFA, PRC, 2025). The GGI closely align with the UN Charter, supporting the central UN role in international affairs, Wenli argues, that rather than to replace, it seeks to improve the operational effectiveness and strengthen the enforcement capacity of the prevailing institutional mechanisms (Wenli, 2025). So, it is an inclusive alternative path to the developing states for international cooperation, through development financing without political conditions, security cooperation rather than formal binding alliances and ideological validation for diverse governance models. According to Monnappa, the strategic aim is to make western-led governance system optional, where he argues that the success for the initiative would not be the failure of the World Bank, but create a world where a developing nation can independently prefer funding mechanisms that best correspond to their policy preferences (Monnappa K C, 2025). Equity among all states irrespective to their power, size and wealth is a distinguishing feature of the GGI. Collectively these initiatives characterize

Beijing's inclusive approach to restructuring international cooperation in the twenty-first century. Rather than operating as a separate policy instrument they conceptualize security, development, civilization and governance as reciprocally reinforcing pillars of shared destiny. In the context of China-Central Asia engagement, these initiatives offer both the strategic direction and normative foundation to strengthen institutional cooperation, regional interdependence and progress towards the SDG 16 and 17.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that the relationship between China and Central Asia have evolved from a traditional bilateral engagement to a well-defined structure of regional interdependence. Through institutional mechanisms such as SCO, C+C5 framework and various other connectivity platforms, regional players have established channels that accelerate economic integration, enable policy coordination and facilitate collective responses to shared problems and challenges. Together, China's global initiatives offer strategic coherence to its engagement with the Central Asian republics, their mounting integration into regional collaboration mechanisms suggests an effort to bring into line development priorities of local and regional level with broader objectives of sustainable development and global governance. The increased institutionalized regional interdependence through collaboration, connectivity and governance mechanism has strengthened regional actors' capacity to pursue shared security objective while advancing broader cooperation and partnership for border and transit security, to combat transnational organized crimes and intelligence sharing.

This Chinese engagement in Central Asia demonstrates that security and development are not reciprocally exclusive but progressively interrelated dimensions or features of regional cooperation. China's development-oriented regional strategy has become an imperative instrument for maintaining or sustaining long-term stability. In this regard, Chinese BRI exhibits its growing preference for achieving security through development and interdependency rather than just relying on traditional security-oriented

mechanisms. Conclusively, China's strategy integrates security and development, which highlights how interdependence can serve as a

vehicle to promote cooperative, more integrated and sustainable regional order plus security in the twenty-first century.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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